



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Maryland Society to Display Rare USCT Flag

July 6, 2004 –Courtesy CWI Premium- The Maryland Historical Society is currently featuring a display on its recently acquired flag of the 4th Regiment US Colored Troops, the first of six African American regiments from Maryland to serve in the Civil War.

The flag will be displayed in the McCardle Textile Gallery of the Carey Center for Maryland Life until July 18. "As one of fewer than 25 flags from the U. S. Colored Infantry Troops to survive the Civil War, the flag is a remarkable, rare survival," said MDHS curator Jeannine Disviscour. "That fact alone would be enough to make this object of historical importance. However it is the additional stories associated with this flag that make it so extraordinary." The flag is the one saved by Sergeant Major Christian A. Fleetwood of Baltimore during the Battle of New Market Heights (Chaffin's Farm) which took place September 29, 1864, in Virginia. Fleetwood was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions in saving the flag. "The condition of the flag also lends to its appeal," Disviscour explained. "The legacy of the 4th Regiment US Colored Troops pride and bravery has forever left its stamp on this stained, torn, battle-worn flag. The flag also reminds us that the African Americans fighting in the US Colored Troops were fighting for so much more than keeping the Union together. They were fighting for their freedom."

The battle of New Market Heights, Virginia, was one of the numerous desperate, bloody, indecisive battles

around Petersburg, the society noted in a press release, but it demonstrated the bravery and heroism of African American troops. During the hour-long engagement the 4th USCT suffered almost 180 casualties. Christian A. Fleetwood, Alfred B. Hilton and Charles Veal all received the Congressional Medal of Honor for their heroic efforts to save the flag of the 4th that fateful day. Battle flags were used in the Civil War to communicate with soldiers in the regiments. Soldiers looked to the flag, which was typically six and a half feet tall by six feet wide and mounted on a staff or pike nine feet ten inches tall, to know their regiments movement.



4th Regiment U.S.C.T. Civil War Flag, 1863

Regiments were given two flags: one was the national colors (based on the US flag), and the other was the regimental color (blue silk with the US arms or state coat of arms.) The flag recently acquired by the MDHS is the national colors, with special presentation text painted on the canton (upper left corner). The top of the flag is edged with twisted gold-colored wire, called "gold bullion." On one side of the canton is the message *Presented to the 4th*

Regt. U. S. Colored Troops by the Colored Ladies of Baltimore painted in gold, surrounded by 35 gold stars. The other side of the blue canton is painted with a full-color American eagle and 13 gold stars and the text "E Pluribus Unum."

The flag is slightly smaller than regulation size at 5 and a half feet tall by 5 feet wide. Variations in size were not uncommon for hand-sewn flags from this time. The stripes are stained and torn, with much of the width missing from hard use and the fragile nature of silk.

After July 18, the flag will be taken off exhibition and sent away for conservation so that the silk fabric can be stabilized and the stains and dirt on the flag can be analyzed for additional evidence.

Once the flag is conserved, plans are for the 4th Regiment flag to become part of the MDHS's groundbreaking exhibition *Looking for Liberty: An Overview of Maryland History*. The MdHS is seeking contributions toward the conservation of this important flag. Those interested in supporting the project should contact museum director Nancy Davis at (410) 685-3750, ext.343.

Those wishing further information on the flag display or the history of Christian Fleetwood and the other members of the 4th Regiment USCT should consult the Society's website at www.mdhs.org

Progress Continues on Harpers Ferry Park Expansion Bill

June 22, 2004 –Courtesy CWI Premium- An important committee of the US House of Representatives held a hearing last week on a proposal to expand the boundary limits at Harpers Ferry National



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Historical Park by almost a third, from the current 2,505 acres to 3,745 acres.

The measure was introduced by US Sen. Robert C. Byrd last fall. A companion bill was passed by the Senate last month. Byrd represents West Virginia where the park is located. The House bill was heard by the National Parks, Recreation and Public Lands subcommittee of the House Resources Committee. "This is an important bill for Harpers Ferry, for the Eastern Panhandle, and, in fact, for the nation. By expanding the park's boundaries, we can protect the rich historic and recreational opportunities that the park offers to residents and tourists alike," Byrd said in a press release to the Hagerstown Herald-Mail. The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has endorsed the proposal, which was cosponsored by U.S. Rep. Shelley Moore Capito, to add the 1,240 acres to the park. "This expansion is critical to the future of Harpers Ferry," said NPCA Mid-Atlantic Regional Director Joy Oakes. "Sen. Byrd and Rep. Capito are champions for the park and leaders in preserving our nation's priceless heritage from suburban sprawl and other pressures." Capito, R-W.Va., testified today before the House subcommittee in support of the proposal to add the Civil War landscape to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, a release from Capito's office said. Byrd has helped provide millions of dollars in federal funding for the National Park Service to update, renovate, and refurbish buildings and educational resources at Harpers Ferry.

Harpers Ferry, which became part of the National Park System in 1944,

hosted more than 250,000 visitors last year.

Byrd has long been known as a supporter of the park. His last major venture, in 2001, shepherded \$2 million through Congress to allow the NPS, in conjunction with Civil War preservation groups, to purchase the Murphy Farm property adjacent to the park, the release said.

He also helped conclude more than four decades of negotiations between the National Park Service and CSX Corp., resulting in the Park Service's acquisition of the historic U.S. Army Grounds in Harpers Ferry, the release said.

The property includes both the Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) train station and the site where John Brown and his raiders barricaded themselves in 1859.

Mystery of What Caused Hunley Sinking Continues

July 6, 2004 –Courtesy CWI Premium- For an object that's been under continuous examination by the top experts in the world for nearly four years, the Confederate submarine Hunley is still the subject of more questions than answers. For all the wonderful things that have been turned up since the boat's recovery, the question that was at the top of the list then is at the top of the list today: what made the damn thing sink? The obvious suspects have been pretty well ruled out. It wasn't Professor Plum in the conservatory with the candlestick, and it wasn't a lucky shot that blew out the peephole in the front conning tower either. While the Hunley had some holes in the hull when she was brought to the surface, all have been determined to have been caused by events many years after the actual sinking. The next area of exploration will be a

set of valves attached to a pump in the rear of the Hunley. Although the boat has long since been cleared of the mud that seeped into it during its years on the ocean floor just outside Charleston Harbor, layers of much harder material known as concretion still line most of the interior. After the encrustations are carefully chipped away from the valves, scientists will examine and X-ray them to see what can be determined as to whether they are in the open or closed position, Glenn McConnell recently told the *Columbia State* newspaper. McConnell is chairman of the Hunley Commission and also a South Carolina state senator. The valve studies may tell whether the crew was attempting to pump out water that may have spilled in during attempts to replenish the air supply inside Hunley, McConnell said. "The question is, how did they get into that shape?" McConnell said. "Did the weather get rough that night and every time they replenished air with the hatches open did they take on water?"

McConnell said last week that new research suggested a weather front moved through the area the night the Hunley set out on its mission. (Dare we say it: "The weather started getting rough, the tiny ship was tossed..."? Naw, that would be rude.) "Was she battling to come in against roughening seas and did she have trouble taking on air?" he asked. "It's like a giant jigsaw puzzle, and each of these little pieces starts to paint the picture."

Scientists also hope to recover additional artifacts, such as canteens or additional billfolds, that may be encrusted beneath the crew bench. "It would seem there would be because they only found one wallet, and it would seem that more than one



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person would have a wallet," McConnell said.

Scientists also are removing ballast blocks from the sub. They appear to be pieces of iron originally used for some other purpose. Some are triangular, some are square and some are round, McConnell said. The Hunley, housed at a conservation lab at the old Charleston Naval Base, will eventually go on display in a North Charleston museum.

In the coming months, experts will decide the best method for preserving the submarine. There are a few options:

Usually large marine artifacts are conserved with electrolysis, in which an electrical current removes corrosive salts from metal artifacts in water, but sometimes the field doesn't penetrate behind pieces bolted or riveted together, as on the Hunley. Other options include cold plasma reduction, in which hydrogen gas is blown over an artifact in a sealed container and the plasma pulls out impurities, or the use of "supercritical fluids" to dissolve them.

USS Monitor to Get New Wing at Maritime Museum

June 4, 2004 –Courtesy CWI Premium- The Maritime Museum in Newport News, Virginia, has been feeling rather bloated in recent years as it strained to hold the increasing number of artifacts, particularly those from the USS Monitor, that have been recovered from the ocean floor. To relieve the pressure somewhat, the facility will give birth to a new unit where the Monitor will be the star of the show.

Maritime Museum president John Hightower announced the plans, and showed off some of the plans for the new facility ahead of the official

announcement set for Thursday in Washington, the Richmond Times-Dispatch reported.

"The museum will tell the story of the vessel, its designers and her crew in a way that captures the human drama of history, a way that makes history immediate and alive," Hightower said. The 63,500-square-foot center will include about 18,000 square feet of exhibition space, increasing the Mariners' Museum current exhibition space by about a third. The proposed USS Monitor Center in Newport News will use all the technical razzle-dazzle of a theme-park attraction to tell the story of a famous Civil War fighting ship. The \$30 million facility is scheduled to open in 2007 as an addition to the Mariners' Museum.

Hightower said fund-raising has already neared the halfway point, with more than \$14 million in public and private donations. Of the \$30 million needed to build the center, about \$20 million is expected to come from public sources. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) has already contributed \$9.5 million of that amount, officials said. The museum is conducting a campaign to raise \$10 million from private sources, including foundations, corporations and individuals. A \$250,000 gift from Northrop Grumman Newport News, which makes submarines and aircraft carriers in Newport News, was to be announced late this week. The Northrop Grumman gift will in turn trigger additional support from a \$2 million challenge grant made by media executive Frank Batten. Lyons, the museum spokesman, said a market study by researchers at Virginia Commonwealth University predicts the new center will add \$5.9 million a year to the state's economy

and boost attendance at the museum from its current annual level of about 75,000 to a steady flow of about 185,000 visitors.

"This will basically make us a destination," Lyons said.

Hightower's museum and NOAA will operate the center not only as a museum designed to retell the saga of the Civil War ironclad USS Monitor with maximum emotional impact, but also as a research and conservation facility for marine artifacts recovered in the future.



View of proposed Monitor Wing at the Mariners' Museum in Newport News.

- graphic courtesy Mariners' Museum

As described by Hightower's plans, visitors will enter the exhibit space through a gallery portraying the Monitor's sinking with lighting and sound effects to create the experience of the storm. There will be taped narratives of actors portraying the crew members' experiences that night.

Most of the Monitor's crew survived the vessel's sinking, rescued by the USS Rhode Island which was towing the ironclad to its new duty station with the blockade of Confederate ports. Some of those survivors wrote of their experiences in magazine articles which were later collected into volumes such as *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*.

The galleries that follow will include re-creations of a Civil War-era dock and sailors' living quarters. There will



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be an interactive exhibit that will allow visitors to maneuver an Age of Sail warship through winds and currents during a battle. Doors will lead to a full-scale outdoor reproduction of the Monitor.

Throughout the galleries will be "personal story stations" to enlighten visitors through photos, narratives and artifacts about the people crucial to the Monitor's story. Finally, visitors will reach the "Battle Theatre."

"That exhibit is going to be amazing," said Justin Lyons, a Mariners' Museum spokesman. He said the Battle Theatre audience will hear and feel cannonballs hitting the turret, smell the gunpowder and hear the crew members working feverishly to load and fire.

At one point in the approximately 15-minute show, the theater's ceiling will light up to give the audience the impression they are looking into the turret from below during the battle. The wreck of the Monitor was rediscovered nearly a century later, and the site on the sea floor in 1975 became the nation's first national marine sanctuary.

More recently, NOAA began recovering parts of the Monitor for study and protection against deterioration. The Mariners' Museum became the repository for all artifacts and archives connected with the ironclad. The museum now has more than 1,100 artifacts, including the Monitor's most startling innovation, a rotating gun turret.

"Lincoln's Washington" Special Bus Tours Planned

June 21, 2004 –Courtesy CWI Premium- When hundreds of thousands of soldiers, government

workers, and newspaper correspondents flooded Washington at the height of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln and his family found refuge at the Soldiers' Home. With this summer's guided tour, *Civil War Capital: Lincoln's Washington*, modern-day visitors can retrace their steps through the city from the comfort of an air-conditioned bus.

To be held on five Saturdays only – July 10, 17, 24, 31, and August 7 – the three-hour Cultural Tourism DC bus tour starts at 9:15 am at the DC Visitor Information Center inside the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. The closest stop on the DC Metro subway system is Federal Triangle. The tour then follows the historic roads that took soldiers to and from Fort Stevens. Built to defend the northern approaches to the city, Fort Stevens was the only Civil War fort in Washington to come under Confederate fire. President Lincoln stood on the ramparts as Union forces repelled the advancing rebels in July 1864.

At Fort Stevens participants also spend time with a "visitor from the past" – "Mrs. Thomas," an African American property owner, whose land became the site for Fort Stevens. As the tour heads to the President Lincoln and Soldiers' Home National Monument, participants have a surprise encounter with a "Civil War hero."

The cottage where Lincoln lived at Soldiers' Home is currently under restoration and closed to the public. An expert from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which stewards the site, opens the National Monument to bus tour participants and leads a behind-the-scenes tour.

This specialist shares some of the surprises the restoration process has revealed and sheds light on Lincoln's home away from home. "The cottage is amazingly well-preserved," says Sophia Lynn, of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "Visitors will learn about a part of Lincoln's world that has never been on public view before." The Lincolns left the White House in June 1862 shortly after the death of their son Willie. Escaping the hustle and bustle of the Union command center, they moved to the grounds of the Soldiers' Home, originally established for disabled and retired military veterans. The President made the daily three-mile commute from the Soldiers' Home to the White House from June through November for three years.

Matthew Pinsker, author of the recently released *Lincoln's Sanctuary: Abraham Lincoln and the Soldier's Home*, has linked Lincoln's stay at Soldiers' Home with critical war developments such as emancipation, the firing of General McClellan, and the election of 1864. From Soldiers' Home, the bus tour wends its way to the African American Civil War Memorial on U Street, the only memorial to the war's United States Colored Troops. The guide describes the critical role of African Americans during this period and recalls the early emancipation of Washington's slaves in 1862. As the bus heads back toward Downtown Washington, participants hear about Matthew Brady's attempts to photograph the battlefield, Clara Barton's tireless efforts on behalf of missing persons, and John Wilkes Booth's assassination of President Lincoln.

Tickets for *Civil War Capital: Lincoln's Washington* are \$29 and may be



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purchased online at CulturalTourismDC.org or at the DC Visitor Information Center inside the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW (Metro: Federal Triangle). Reservations are recommended, but not required at 202-661-7576. For more information check the website listed above or call 202-828-WALK.

Heritage Groups Anxious to Accept Descendant's Application

July 2, 2004 –Courtesy CWI Premium- Her father was the descendant of men who fought in the American Revolution and the Civil War, and groups which celebrate such ancestry are happy to have her. The daughter of the late Sen. Strom Thurmond says that she has had no hint of rejection because her mother was black.

Essie Mae Washington-Williams received national publicity earlier this year when she revealed that she was the result of a relationship between a much younger Thurmond and her mother, who at the time was a 15 year old servant in the family's South Carolina home.

Now she has applied to join the United Daughters of the Confederacy as well as the Daughters of the American Revolution, and representatives of both groups say they see no difficulties. Thurmond was a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans for many years.

"Through my father's line, I am fortunate to trace my heritage back to the birth of our nation and beyond," Williams said in a statement, The State newspaper of Columbia SC reported.

"On my mother's side, like most African-Americans, my history is broken by the course of human events," she added.

To join the Confederate group, Washington-Williams must show she is related by blood to descendants of men or women who served honorably in the Army, Navy or Civil Service of the Confederate States of America or gave material aid to the cause. Similarly, any woman 18 or older, regardless of race, religion, or ethnic background, who can prove she is related by blood to a patriot of the American Revolution, is eligible for membership in the DAR. The group defines a "patriot" as one who provided service or direct assistance in achieving the Colonies' independence from Great Britain, not strictly as one who served in the military at the time.

Washington-Williams, now 78, did not reveal her relationship to the late senator until after his death last year. She said he had always provided for her mother and herself, and it was her mother's wish that they not act in a way which could have harmed his political career. He was the longest-serving member of the Senate in American history.

Thurmond was a noted advocate of racial segregation for many years, to the extent of running for president as a "Dixiecrat," a group of offshoot Southern Democrats who objected to Federal civil rights laws. In later life he changed his views to include racial equality.

The heritage groups Washington-Williams now seeks to join had similarly checkered histories on admitting members of races other than white. The Daughters of the American Revolution once forbade noted opera singer Marion Anderson perform a recital in their Washington

hall because she was black. The incident prompted then First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt to resign from the group.

Her attorney Frank Wheaton said that her sons would be applying to join the Sons of Confederate Veterans and Sons of the American Revolution based on their ancestry through Thurmond.

In an announcement timed for the July 4th holiday, Wheaton said Washington-Williams, a retired Los Angeles teacher, wants her children and grandchildren to connect to all aspects of their heritage — white and black.

She also will pursue a prominent role with the Washington, D.C.-based Black Patriots Foundation, which was formed in 1985 to establish a national memorial to the 5,000 blacks who fought in the Revolutionary War. Washington-Williams and her family would be welcome to join the United Daughters of the Confederacy or the Sons of Confederate Veterans, members of both organizations said Wednesday.

A spokesman for the DAR said Washington-Williams' application would be received enthusiastically. "We have made big strides in growing our diversity in the past 10 years," DAR spokesman April Watkins said. The 170,000-member group does not keep track of the race of its members, she said. It receives 12,000 to 17,000 applications a year, and most are accepted. The Confederate organizations also said they do not keep tabs on the racial makeup of their membership.

Attorney Wheaton said Washington-Williams hopes her participation in the DAR will honor those women who have worked to integrate the group.



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Wisconsin Man Receives Honors from Daughters of the Confederacy

June 10, 2004 -Courtesy CWI Premium- The Wisconsin Dells are famous for a lot of things, having been a popular Midwestern summer retreat and vacation site for decades. Having large numbers of resorts and other touristy attractions they have never felt the need to promote the fact that one of the most famous women of the Civil War died and was buried there.

Belle Boyd, Confederate spy, famous beauty of the day and a woman called the "Cleopatra of the Secession," is buried in Spring Grove Cemetery in the town of Wisconsin Dells. For more than 50 years one member of the local American Legion post has made it his duty to tend the grave and keep a flag flying over it. Ollie Reese was surprised on Memorial Day by the presentation of an award called the "Jackson Service Medal" from members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. The day was to be his last raising of the flag over Belle Boyd's grave. The award, named after and bearing an engraving of the face of Confederate Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson, was awarded to Reese by the UDC at their 108th annual convention in Columbia, South Carolina recently. Members of the local Richmond, Va. UDC division presented Reese with a Certificate of Merit as well as a letter from Virginia Gov. Warner commending the Dells native for his work to preserve Boyd's final resting place.

The awards are "greatly appreciated," a surprised Reese said. He was quick to point out that he accepted the commendations on

behalf of Legion Post 187, the official caretakers of the Boyd grave. "Not many Wisconsin cemeteries have a confederate spy," Reese said. He also gave credit to wife Jean, who "helped a lot" over the past few years as Reese is well into his 80s, the Wisconsin Dells Event reported. "I'm not quite as spry as I used to be," he admitted.

Reese recounted how Boyd came to be in Kilbourn at the turn of the century and died nearly penniless. The local Civil War veterans bought the grave plot and in the 1950s, the Legion Post built a mausoleum. UDC representative Ruth Sned reported that her group has recently landscaped the monument near Richmond honoring those soldiers of the Wisconsin 36th Infantry that died in a battle in the early summer of 1864.

She said that she had been wanting to meet Reese since hearing about how he has raised flags over Boyd's grave for the past half century.

Jefferson Davis Home Escapes Damage from "Suspicious" Fire

June 8, 2004 -Courtesy CWI Premium- The Biloxi, Mississippi mansion named Beauvoir, which served as the last home of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, was spared from serious damage after a fire local officials described as being of suspicious origin.

The fire, which occurred on Saturday, was confined to the area of the front doors of the 160 year old plantation building. Some charring of the wooden doors took place and several of the glass panels set in the doors appeared to be ruined, the Biloxi Herald reported.

Patrick Hotard, executive director of the historic home and library, said that damage to the front porch was limited by door mats that apparently kept the fire from burning into the wooden planks underneath. The porch area had recently undergone \$120,000 in repairs.

Officials speculated that the fire might have been timed to spoil a Saturday party to celebrate Jefferson Davis' birthday. The party went on as scheduled.

"Somebody attempted to burn the house," said Hotard. Beauvoir is owned by the Sons of Confederate Veterans organization.

Hotard said an off-duty firefighter saw smoke and "jumped the fence and extinguished the fire."

The firefighter, David Lemasters, doused the fire using a water-filled trash bag. Beauvoir's security guard had not seen the flames. Though the library, grounds and visitor's center remain open for tours, the home, located on the Gulf of Mexico coastal highway US 90, will be closed until an investigation and repairs are complete, officials said. Biloxi Fire Department Battalion Chief Kerry Borden said investigators should know more early this week. He would not discuss the preliminary findings.

"The doors seem to be in pretty bad shape," Hotard said. "The deck is in good shape."

More background on Beauvoir's history and its connections to Jefferson Davis can be found at the group's website at Beauvoir.org.



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End of a Confederate era Montgomery pays respects to last widow of Civil War

MONTGOMERY — It was no secret that Alberta Martin married Confederate veteran William Albert Martin partly because, as a poor young widow in 1927, she needed a way to provide for her little boy. The 81-year-old Martin had a \$50-per-month Confederate pension.

At the end, the Sons of Confederate Veterans were taking care of Mrs. Martin, believed to be the last surviving Confederate widow, when she died at an Enterprise nursing home on Memorial Day at age 97.

The Sons brought her body to Montgomery on June 10, 2004, walked in authentic Confederate military dress with the hearse bearing her casket down a busy city street, and ceremoniously escorted her Confederate-flag-draped mahogany casket into the First White House of the Confederacy.

An hour before the official ceremony began, Joseph W. Willis of Prattville parked his late-model Cadillac in the shade in the State Motor Pool parking garage and walked to his trunk to get out supplies. A personalized license plate advertised "4DIXE" and sported a Confederate battle flag emblem.

In the custom-made dress grays of a Confederate officer, Willis admitted the wool uniform would be steamy in the afternoon sunshine, but for Mrs. Martin, he felt, the effort was worth it. "She was a great little lady, a country lady," Willis said. "She was the last widow on either side; the last Union widow died two or three years ago."

Willis was to be a pallbearer, both for the ceremony in Montgomery and for the 1 p.m. Saturday funeral at First Assembly of God Church in Elba. The

casket will be in Montgomery for viewing until 8 tonight.

Along with other Sons of Confederate Veterans, Willis visited with Mrs. Martin frequently after the group learned of her existence in the early 1990s.

A woman who lived in poverty most of her life, Mrs. Martin went to numerous events in the United States and Canada with the Sons before her health began to fail. "She loved every minute of it," said Willis. He helped do the paperwork to get her into a nursing home in Enterprise when she could no longer live on her own.

Three blocks away, flags on the historic state Capitol flew at half staff because of death of President Reagan. The Confederate flag at the First White House of the Confederacy flew at half staff, too, as the men in wool and cotton Civil War reenactment uniforms ignored the sweat running down their faces and took the casket inside.

Gov. Bob Riley placed a wreath of magnolia leaves and white roses tied with black ribbon in front of the casket before people in street clothes stood in line with others in Civil War era garb to pay their respects.

Appropriate location

"The Sons of Confederate Veterans asked if she could lie in repose here, and our association discussed it; we decided it was part of the period, so it was appropriate for the last Confederate widow to be here where the first lady of the Confederacy had lived," said Cameron Napier.

Napier, as regent of the White House Association of Alabama, directs operation of the house where Jefferson Davis and his wife lived during the brief time Montgomery was the first capital of the Confederacy.

As the afternoon sun began to fade, a white hearse parked in front of the

building slowly pulled away and men in Confederate dress who were pallbearers or part of the ceremony's honor guard gathered just outside the house to talk.



AP Photo

Gov. Bob Riley pays his respects to Alice Martin, the last widow of a Civil War veteran, June 10, at the First White House of the Confederacy in Montgomery.

"Mrs. Martin was important because she was the last living link to our past," said Ken McGhee of Alexander City. "Until she passed away, we had that resource, someone who had actually lived with and talked to a Confederate soldier. Now that resource is gone forever."

McGhee laughed when he recalled Mrs. Martin's sense of humor. "She was a real fun lady. When we'd visit, she'd snack on Cheetos and just laugh with us, just have fun."

One couple from Eclectic snapped photographs and talked quietly. Larry Warren and his wife, Janice, are both involved in Confederate groups. He is in the Tallasse Armory Guard and she belongs to the Order of the Confederate Rose.

Dressed in a black sport coat with a royal blue tie bearing illustrations of four Confederate flags, Warren said Mrs. Martin "was the end of an era, and we need to honor that."

The couple believes that Confederate groups such as the ones they belong to are the only way to keep the era alive. "Southern history is not politically correct," Warren said.